

CATHERINE'S LITERARY WORK

charity towards Me and towards her neighbour, and to preserve her in that charity."¹ Such souls are deluded by spiritual self-love, and are easily deceived by false visions that come from the devil. But the soul who has attained to perfect love, and who truly knows herself, does not consider the gifts and graces of her divine Friend, but the charity with which He gives them. Without leaving the cell of self-knowledge, she goes forth in God's name, prepared to endure sufferings, and to put into practice for the service of her neighbour the virtues that she has conceived in her mystical habitation. Thus the soul attains a fourth state, of perfect union in God : " for there is no love of Me without love of man, and no love of man without love of Me, for the one love cannot be separated from the other." ²

In this state of perfect union, the Saints receive such strength that they not merely bear with patience, but long with panting desire to endure suffering for the glory of God's name. With St. Paul, such as these bear in their bodies the marks of Christ: '* that is, the crucified love that they have glows out in their bodies, and they reveal it by despising themselves, and by delighting in insults, enduring troubles and pains from whatever side and in whatever way I concede them." Perfectly dead to their own will, they are never deprived of the presence of God even in feeling : " I continually reside by grace and by feeling in their souls ; and whenever they wish to unite their mind with Me through affection of love, they can do so ; for their desire has attained to such complete union, through love's affection, that nothing can separate them from Me." ⁸ But although such souls ever possess God by grace, and realize His presence in feeling, they cannot be uninterruptedly united to Him as long as they

are fettered to the body : " For, when such souls rise
up
with panting desire, they run with virtue along the
bridge of
the doctrine of Christ crucified, and reach the gate ;
lifting up
their minds to Me, bathed and inebriated with blood,
inflamed
with the fire of love, they taste in Me the eternal
Godhead, which
is to them a sea of peace, with which the soul
becomes so united

¹ Cap. 69.

^a Cap. 74. 8 Cap. 78.